

Washington Conservation Commission  
Minutes – April 18, 2012

Assembly time: 7:00 PM.

Present: Jed Schwartz, Carol Andrews, Nan Schwartz, Johanna Young, Arin Mills and Ken Eastman

1.0 Approval of Minutes: Minutes from March meeting, Ken said that the discussion about climate was illuminating, he received a newsletter from UNH where they had a picture of the university ski team with their skis mounted on wheels. Johanna made a motion to approve, Carol seconded, all voted in favor.

2.0 Old Business:

2.1 Permits Committee – We received a copy of a Permit by Notification for culvert replacement and headwall reconstruction for the road within Pillsbury State Park.

3.0 Committee and Board reports:

3.1 Land Protection Committee – Jed mentioned a walk coming up to look at a property.

3.2 Energy Committee – Johanna reports that the Energy Committee members attended the Energy Conference on March 30<sup>th</sup>, in Penacook. They held a networking session at the conference where she got business cards and talked to many people about our solar panel installation. She said the keynote speaker talked about how the military is way out in front on Climate and Energy issues and hopefully their innovation will spread into the public realm. They had a breakout group talking about town wide energy policy and the need to work on an energy chapter for the master plan.

They have a new potential member that they will be bringing to the Selectmen for appointment.

There is a possible Button Up presentation they are working on for the fall, Bob Fraser is coordinating. She said they are hoping to do a hands on component. They will coordinate with the

Selectmen for a possible project.

3.3 Planning Board – Nan reported that the PB is working on a cell tower application for Farnsworth Hill and that there is a special town meeting on Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> at 2PM at Camp Morgan Lodge so the selectmen can enter into a lease for a cell tower at the transfer station.

3.4 Forestry Committee – No news.

3.5 Legislative update – Carol said that HB 514 had passed earlier in the day. This bill is troublesome for conservation commissions as it makes it difficult to enter private properties to collect data for Master Plans or Natural Resource Inventories. She suggested when we update the NRI and Master Plan we make a note saying all data was collected with landowner permission.

4.0 Election of Officers:

Carol made a motion to continue our slate of officers: Jed as Chair, Sandy as Vice Chair and Nan as Secretary, Arin seconded, all voted in favor.

5.0 Public Presentation possibilities:

5.1 Arin has been in touch with Susanne Lull about the scheduled visit to the Elementary School on May 21<sup>st</sup>, Monday by WoW. More information on WoW here: [http://www.fws.gov/r5soc/educational\\_resources/watershed-on-wheels.html](http://www.fws.gov/r5soc/educational_resources/watershed-on-wheels.html). Arin will let us know how many chaperones and helpers will be needed at the visit.

5.2 Nan spoke about a workshop on leading hikes on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 10am to 2pm, at Concord Conservation Center. It is free and she handed out a flyer for the workshop. We talked about a few hikes we could lead including the Eccardt Farm conservation easement trail which makes a great loop coming out on the Mountain Road. Jed will check out the difficulty and length of the trail so we can plan something.

Johanna thought we could do a beaver watch at her pond. The beavers are always out and busy in the early evening between 7 and 8PM.

Arin mentioned planning a walk or presentation for July. Nan mentioned the other possibilities she found for presentations – Speaking for Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Stewards. We will continue our discussion.

Nan mentioned the Forest Society is looking for land stewards and they have a training session May 11 & 12<sup>th</sup> in Greenfield, NH. They have a parcel in Washington and Marlow, the Rassmussen Forest that needs a steward.

6.0 Adopt-a-Highway – We picked dates for our trash pickup route. We will meet at 9AM on Saturday May 5<sup>th</sup>, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, August 18<sup>th</sup>, October 6<sup>th</sup>, we will have the next day, Sunday, as the rain date for each one.

7.0 New Business:

7.1 Nan said she has sent in the information for the update of GranitView mapping conservation lands layer. She included all the new town forests and the Eccardt Farm Conservation Easement pieces. When they finish adding all the new data our conservation land will all show up on the Granit mapping software layer.

7.2 Ken spoke about the selectmen's junkyard project, they are initiating because they have been getting complaints. They have decided to hold a meeting on May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 3PM with the health officer, the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and various other town officials to talk about what can be done. Nan shared an article that she found on the LGC site concerning junkyards and junky yards. Carol asked how widespread the problem is, Ken replied that two are habitual, maybe more. Carol suggested that maybe an ordinance would be the place to start. She and Jed were unsure what the CC could do to help, within our authority. Nan suggested involving Ed Thayer, thinking that maybe the transfer station could waive fees to help people get rid of junk. She thought if you come up with a way to help people clean up it might be

better than going after them legally. Nan and whomever else can go, will attend the meeting and try to come up with ideas on the issue.

8.0 Other business – Arin wanted to talk about who follows up after DES permitting to make sure the owner does what was specified on the plans. Sometimes DES puts conditions on a permit she wanted to know who follows up on this. Carol said that anyone can send a comment to DES if they see a problem but there is no process for follow up. The Selectmen do the occupancy permits but they don't look beyond life safety issues with the building. Nan mentioned silt fences being left up long after a project is done, they can become a nuisance when left in place and they are not needed anymore.

#### 9.0 What's Happening in Nature?

It is extremely dry and there has been no rain. There is a big danger of forest fires right now and Jed has been to several in the last week.

Arin heard wood frogs croaking and she saw two moose crossing Rt. 31, near the transfer station.

Jed saw a young moose on East Washington Rd, just over the Hillsboro line.

Johanna has wood ducks swimming in her pond. She checked after Jed mentioned the pollywogs last month and noticed thousands of them in her pond. They went away when it got cold again. She also observed newts mating in her pond.

Carol said that ice out on Halfmoon Pond was March 22<sup>nd</sup>, which was really early. She spotted a Bald Eagle on the pond right when the ice went out.

Ken said the eagle on Millen Pond is back.

Jed said that ice out on Mill Pond was really early this year also, there were times in February when the ice was gone in the middle of the pond.

Arin said she heard loons on Ashuelot Pond last Saturday. She has also seen grouse lately out in Ashuelot and also Highland Lake.

They don't want to get out of the way of the car so she has to stop and wait for them to move. She is tracking her hognose snake

again at the Guard's property. They are having a new tracking device put on him because the old one has become unreliable. Ken saw a dozen or so loons on Millen Pond recently, they seemed to be enroute because they left after a short stay. He said that one loon and a red headed water bird (maybe a merganser) hung around together for a few days longer, after the others left. Nan saw a Kingfisher sitting on the side of the dam in East Washington this evening.

Johanna saw a Downy Woodpecker near her house.

Jed reported seeing a pair of Piliated Woodpeckers in East Washington. You can hear them pecking away in the woods and it is loud.

Ken asked about some bees he spotted that appeared to be coming out of the ground in his driveway. Carol said there are lots of bees that live in ground nests.

Arin said that the vernal pool where we usually do our vernal pool visit is just about dry. We hope it rains soon, so the pool creatures will have a chance to breed. Luckily we aren't doing our visit this year, but we will return next spring.

Speaking of water or the lack of it, have you had your well water tested? NHDES is hoping to raise awareness about testing your well water to reduce exposure to harmful contaminants. Click here to learn more about testing the water in your well, it's easy and not too expensive: [http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC\\_Html/NewinNature.html](http://www.washingtonnh.org/WCC_Html/NewinNature.html)

10. Correspondence:

Registration form for NH the Beautiful, to organize a town wide clean up day

Thank you letter from ARLAC, Barbara Skuly for our \$100 donation for Ashuelot River water testing

Copy of Pillsbury State Park permit by notification for roadway maintenance, culvert replacement and headwall reconstruction in park

11.0 Adjourned at 8:35 PM, our next scheduled meeting is May 16th at 7 PM in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Schwartz  
Secretary